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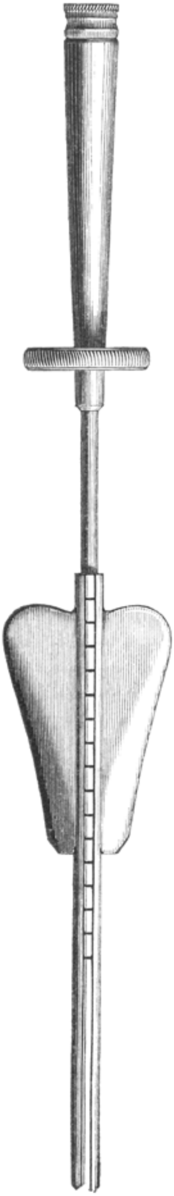
PART I.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

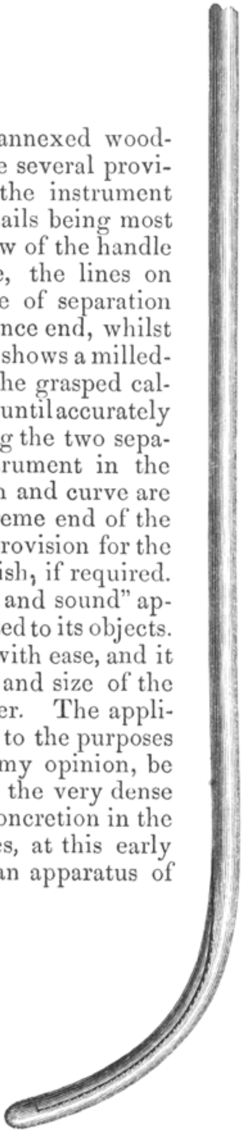
ART. XI.—*On a Calculus Meter and Sound for the Child.* By CHRISTOPHER FLEMING, M. D., M. R. I. A., Corresponding Foreign Member of the Surgical Society of Paris; Member of the Court of Examiners in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland; Surgeon to the Richmond and Netterville Hospitals, &c. &c.

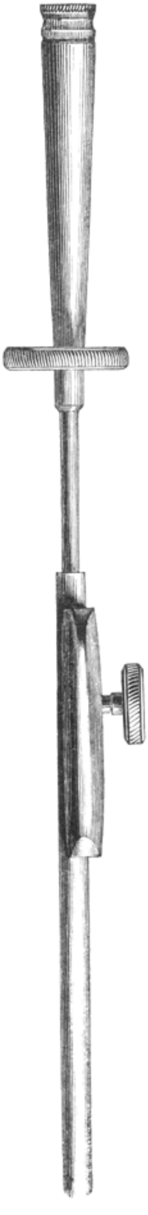
IN the twelfth Number of the present series of the Dublin Hospital Gazette, I made some remarks on the subject of lithotomy, in connexion with cases which had recently occurred under my care; and I particularly alluded to the value likely to arise from the capability of estimating the size of a calculus in the bladder of the child, previous to the performance of such operation. I now take the opportunity of submitting the outline of an instrument constructed for that purpose by Messrs. Thompson and O'Neill, of Henry-street, in this city, cutlers. The instrument is on the principle of Mr. L'Estrange's, being modified for the objects in view. Its length is thirteen inches; its size between the numbers 5 and 6 on the ordinary catheter scale; and its curve that which I find to answer excellently well for catheter or for sound in childhood.



On referring to the annexed woodcuts by Mr. Oldham, the several provisions contemplated in the instrument will be manifest, the details being most accurate. The front view of the handle portion exhibits a scale, the lines on which mark the distance of separation of the blades at the entrance end, whilst the side view of the same shows a milled-headed screw whereby the grasped calculus is secured and fixed until accurately measured; and by joining the two separate halves of the instrument in the drawings its exact length and curve are ascertained; at the extreme end of the handle portion is also a provision for the sounding-board or tun-dish, if required.

The "calculus meter and sound" appears to me to be well suited to its objects. It traverses the urethra with ease, and it ascertains the presence and size of the calculus, if in the bladder. The application of the instrument to the purposes of lithotrity would, in my opinion, be more than hazardous, as the very dense nature of the calculous concretion in the vast majority of instances, at this early period of life, demands an apparatus of





much more solid construction. However, the practical benefits derivable even from its limited applicability to the measurement of calculi in children are unmistakable. Moreover, it is quite obvious that in a case where the calculus was ascertained to be very small, it might, when grasped, be lodged by this instrument to a greater or less distance in the urethra, when a comparatively simple operation would effect its extraction. Nay, more, apart from such procedure, the urethra, even in the child, might be dilated to a caliber which would admit the partial escape of such class of calculus when found to be present, and, perhaps, insure its final exit. Very large calculi, indeed, are not unfrequently discharged from the bladder, without any surgical assistance, along the tract of the urethra. I have many such in my possession.

It is not too much thus to anticipate equally satisfactory results with the cooperation of the surgeon, and I do hope that the instrument now submitted to the profession will be found a useful auxiliary.